

**Reading:** *To read without reflection is like eating without digestion.*—Edmund Burke, British statesman, 1729-1797

### Knowing what to look out for can reduce hazards

# Staying alert can add

## Food preparation tips to help keep holiday meals safe

*Practical advice extracted from consumer publications and safety bulletins.*

It's that time of year again! The time for giving thanks, visiting relatives, preparing holiday meals and celebrating a happy time of the year all the way through December.

Here are a few helpful tips to follow, so you can enjoy a healthy holiday.

Bacteria is the main culprit which can lead to food-borne illnesses (such as salmonella poisoning), particularly with poultry. This can be most harmful to pregnant women, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

#### **•Thaw poultry slowly in the refrigerator**

Pleasant room temperatures promote the growth of bacteria on the outside surface of poultry even though the chicken, turkey, duck or goose remains frozen inside. Thawing poultry in the refrigerator can take from one to five days depending on the size of the bird.

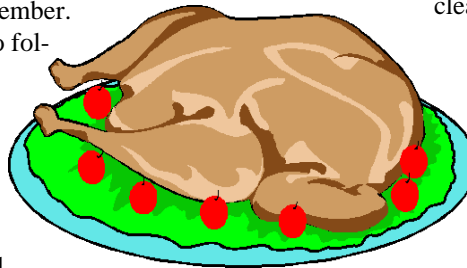
If you must thaw more quickly, place the bird in its *unopened* bag in the sink or large container and cover with cold water. Thawing in cold water can take from four to 12 hours. Change the water every 30 minutes to keep it cold.

If you buy fresh turkey, refrigerate it at 40

degrees Fahrenheit for no more than one to two days before cooking.

#### **•Rinse poultry before cooking**

Work with a clean bird on a clean working surface, and do not stuff poultry until you are ready to cook it. Then, stuff loosely (no more than two-thirds full) and remove immediately after cooking.



#### **•Cook turkey at oven temperatures of at least 325**

**degrees Fahrenheit** Lower temperatures will not sufficiently kill bacteria. Always cook to the well-done stage so there is no pink color to the meat, and juices run clear. Never partially cook to finish later, for this also promotes bacterial growth.

#### **•After cooking, transfer food to shallow containers**

Don't let food sit out in the hot sun! Refrigerate leftover poultry within two hours after cooking. Food does not have to cool completely before refrigerating, so you can't put it away too soon. The best way to store food is to divide it into small containers. Turkey stored in the refrigerator will keep three or four days, but stuffing will keep for only two days. Frozen food will keep for 30 days.

## Personal Safety



- Shop in the company of other people.
- Lock your vehicle.
- Put packages out of sight or locked in trunk.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Carry bags, backpacks or purses close to your body.
- If you feel threatened or that someone is following you, seek out police or security guards.

#### **•Wash dishes that held raw poultry very well in hot, soapy water before re-using.**

The same goes for any serving utensils. Wash anything that touches raw poultry with soapy water before it's used again to prevent the spread of any bacteria. This includes hands, utensils, kitchen counters, sink and cutting boards. Wooden cutting boards should be carefully cleaned after cutting raw poultry. If not, the bacteria can remain in the wood contaminating anything else cut on the board. Supermarkets now carry sprays which kill bacteria which are excellent for cleaning countertops.

**Competitiveness:** *Anyone who believes that the competitive spirit in America is dead has never been in a supermarket when the cashier opens another checkout line.—Ann Landers, American advice columnist*

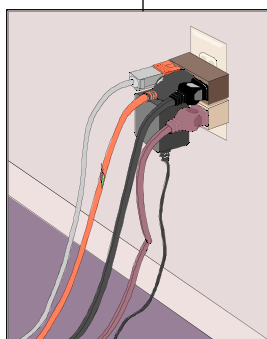
# to holiday happiness

## Avoiding fire hazard at home critical during holidays

**F**ire is the second leading cause of accidental death in the home. Each year, more than 3,500 people die in home fires, and nationwide there are more than 400,000 residential fires serious enough to be reported to fire departments.

With increased use of electrical outlets for decorations, a fused outlet strip can help avoid trouble. Also, install smoke detectors in each room and keep fresh batteries in each unit.

About 90 percent of U.S. households have smoke detectors installed. However, a recent Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) survey showed that the smoke detectors in 20 percent of those households — about 16 million — were not



working, mostly because the battery was dead or missing.

“Smoke detectors can save lives, but they won’t work if they are not maintained,” said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. “They should be tested monthly, and the batteries should be replaced at least once a year or when they make a ‘chirping’ sound.”

Long-life smoke detectors with 10-year batteries have been available to consumers since 1995. These long-life detectors also should be tested monthly. CPSC recommends consumers place a smoke detector that meets the requirements of Underwriters Laboratories’ (UL) standard outside their bedrooms and on each level of multistory home.

## Motor vehicle safety extends to both car and driver

**E**xercise good judgment on the highways and byways. Don’t drink and drive! Allow extra time to reach destinations due to increased traffic congestion caused by holiday shoppers, tourists, family visitors and travelers.

Make sure that your vehicle is in good working order: Check water and oil levels whenever you fill up with fuel; check belts and hoses for wear, nicks and tears, and looseness; check brakes frequently; have someone stand behind the vehicle while you turn on lights, turn-signals and press the brake pedal to check that lights work; keep tires properly inflated and watch for pre-mature wear; keep safety inspection current.

Stay alert! Don’t drink and drive. Select a designated driver when partying. Avoid driving while taking medications that cause drowsiness.

Obey all traffic laws. Don’t enter an intersection once the green light changes to yellow.

Come to a complete stop at all stop signs and before making a right turn after a stop, where permitted.

Ensure that all vehicle occupants are wearing seatbelts, including back seat occupants

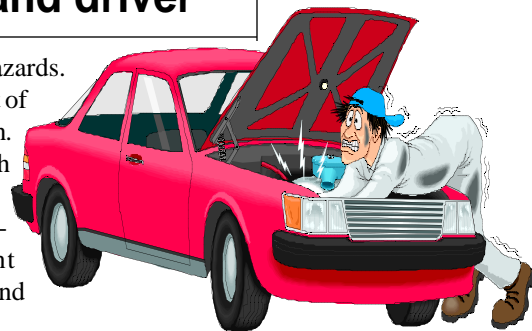
Secure baby-carriers in the back seat. Be aware

of air-bag limitations and hazards.

Give pedestrians the right of way regardless of the situation.

Give yourself enough time to get someplace.

React to special conditions such as inclement weather or slippery roads and adjust speeds accordingly.



## Travel Safety

- Make provision for pets to be taken care of while you are gone.
- Lock all doors and windows before leaving home.
- If your residence will be unoccupied during your absence, make it look lived-in: use timers for lights; have mail held; cancel newspaper.
- Turn off water heaters and flammable appliances.
- Ask your neighbors to keep an eye on your residence.
- Secure cash, tickets and valuables separately from primary luggage.
- Don’t leave bags unattended at the airport, hotel or enroute.
- Report losses of wallets, credit cards, identification immediately.